



2010 SUMMIT ON HEALTH, NUTRITION AND OBESITY: ACTIONS FOR HEALTHY LIVING

HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES: INCORPORATE HEALTH OBJECTIVES IN CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING

“I want to take what was discussed at the Summit and turn our state goals into action that will attack obesity on every level and create a healthy foundation for California’s future.” (Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, 2010 Summit On Health, Nutrition And Obesity, 2/24/10)

Action:

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has issued an Executive Order instructing the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) to establish a Health in All Policies (HiAP) Task Force, facilitated by the California Department of Public Health, to work with existing SGC working groups to identify priority programs, policies, and strategies which improve the health of Californians.

California Context:

Physical, economic, and social environments strongly affect individual choices related to healthy eating and active living, key components of obesity and related chronic disease prevention. Studies show, for example, that if people have access to safe parks they use them and are more physically active. If streets have bike lanes and sidewalks, people are more likely to ride bikes and walk. And when people have access to healthy food in their community they are more likely to eat healthy food. How communities develop the environments in which we live, work, shop, study, and play can make it more or less difficult for individuals to choose healthy behaviors.

In 2008, Governor Schwarzenegger signed legislation creating the Strategic Growth Council, a multi-agency council developed to enhance collaboration among state agencies in their work to improve air and water quality, protect natural resources and agriculture lands, increase the availability of affordable housing, improve infrastructure systems, promote public health, encourage sustainable land use planning, and meet California’s climate change goals. The inclusion of health as a Council consideration was an important recognition of the impacts multiple, diverse policy decisions have on health. Since its inception the SGC has included health in its inter-agency work related to land use, transportation, and other planning efforts.

With California facing a growing burden of obesity related avoidable chronic illnesses such as heart disease, stroke, and diabetes, the development of multi-agency strategies to improve health outcomes is especially important now. The SGC provides a unique opportunity for inter-agency collaboration to identify priority programs, policies, and strategies which improve the health of Californians while advancing other Administration goals. By establishing a HiAP Task Force to collaborate with existing SGC working groups, the SGC can strengthen its current efforts to identify priority recommendations for further consideration.

Success Stories:

Recognizing the impacts multiple policies have on health, some communities have incorporated health considerations into broader planning efforts. The City of Fresno, for example, changed its zoning code to permit farmers markets in neighborhoods, improving access to healthy local produce. Humboldt County conducted Health Impact Assessments to help inform policy makers of the consequences of various growth scenarios. And in Contra Costa County, Richmond was one of the first cities in the nation to incorporate a health element in its general plan.